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REGIONS
REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT IN WA

Part 9: Future of the Mid West

Summary of proceedings

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Queen Elizabeth II Centre, Geraldton

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This document is based on discussions and presentations at CEDA's Future of the Mid West event held on 3 March 2016. This document reflects the presentations delivered by speakers at the event, which do not necessarily reflect the views or opinions of CEDA, the series sponsors or the event sponsors.

Please note: The audio recordings used for this transcript were unavailable for the presenters listed below, which meant that an accurate summary was unable to be drafted. Some PowerPoints are available on the CEDA website. We apologise for the inconvenience.

- Session 1: Vision for the Mid West
 - Gavin Treasure, Chief Executive Officer, Mid West Development Commission
- Session 3: Innovation in the Mid West
 - Ken Diehm, Chief Executive Officer, City of Greater Geraldton
 - Andrew Outhwaite, Founder, Pollinators Inc.
 - Professor Carole Jackson, Science Director, International Centre for Radio Astronomy Research, Curtin University; Member, Australia and New Zealand Square Kilometre Array Coordination Committee
- Session 4: Future industries in the Mid West
 - Erica Starling, Owner and Manager, Indian Ocean Fresh Australia
 - Kingsley Songer, General Manager, 4 Ways Fresh Produce
 - Andrew Worland, General Manager – Wiluna and Project Development, Toro Energy
 - Patrick Bourke, General Manager, Human Resources and Health, Safety, Environment and Community, Karara Mining

Regional Overview

The Mid West region encompasses an area of 478,000 square kilometres, almost one-fifth of Western Australia, extending from the coastal region around the City of Geraldton (Batavia Coast), inland to the desert regions of Wiluna. Divided into 17 local government areas, the region's hinterland is mineral-rich and its coastal waters are abundant in seafood, including the prized rock lobster.

The population of the Mid West was 57,974 in 2015, with the City of Greater Geraldton, situated on the coast, the largest population centre, accounting for 41,223 residents (71 per cent of the region's population). The region's population has been growing at an average annual rate of 1.6 per cent over the last ten years (ABS Estimated Resident Population). The population was forecast to increase to between 65,000 and 69,000 by 2026 (WA Tomorrow – 2015, Department of Planning).

Over the last decade, the regional economy increased in net value (gross regional product) from \$2.6 billion in 2004-05 to \$6.2 billion in 2014-15 (ABS and Department of Regional Development: Gross Regional Product).

The main driver for the regional economy is mining, which accounted for 31.7 per cent of the value of production. Construction added another 13.7 per cent, with agriculture, forestry and fishing contributing 7.5 per cent. Manufacturing and a range of service industries comprise the balance.

The region's workforce reached 30,450 people in 2014-15, having grown at an average annual rate of 2.8 per cent over the last four years. By contrast, Western Australia's workforce grew by 2.5 per cent over the same four-year period.

The gross value of mining in 2014-15 was estimated at \$2.9 billion and was dominated by copper, lead and zinc (34 per cent); iron ore (30 per cent) and gold (29 per cent). The remaining ten per cent was comprised of mineral sands, vanadium, talc, natural gas, silver, gypsum, construction materials and petroleum condensate.

Agriculture also makes an important contribution to the regional economy, valued at \$749 million in 2012-

13. Broad acre crops, in particular wheat, canola and pulses, comprise approximately 80 per cent of the value of the region's agricultural production. Livestock (cattle and sheep) and wool contribute an additional 15 per cent.

Retail turnover is estimated to contribute an additional \$726 million to the regional economy (2014-15), having grown at 4.3 per cent per year over the last decade. Consumer confidence is further reflected in the growth of average income from \$38,834 (2003-04) to \$74,606 in 2013-14; an average annual growth of 6.7 per cent.

The region is recognised for its wildflower tourism, the spectacular gorges of the Kalbarri National Park and offers a range of fishing, diving and historic adventure holidays. As a result, 42,300 international and 499,000 domestic tourists were estimated to have visited the Mid West each year, on average, across 2013, 2014 and 2015. It is estimated that these visitors spent on average \$400 million per year.

Summary of Proceedings

Session 1: Vision for the Mid West

State Government's vision

The Hon. Terry Redman MLA, Minister for Regional Development; Lands, noted that, in regional development, Western Australia's Royalties for Regions program is second to none, with \$6.1 billion invested into more than 3,500 projects since 2008-09.

The Minister gave two examples of significant expenditure in the Mid West. Firstly, the Square Kilometre Array project, which has \$10 million allocated to support a hybrid energy solution. Secondly, \$32,000 granted for communities to maintain their community pool in areas such as Meekatharra and Wiluna, which is at the other end of the scale but very important to the local people, particularly in the more remote parts of the state.

Telecommunications is critical to unlocking the potential opportunities in the state. Eighty-five million dollars of Royalties for Regions funding has been set aside for this, along with resources from Telstra, the private sector, local government funds and some Commonwealth Black Spot funding. This funding will see another 266 new mobile phone towers built in regional Western Australia. Minister Redman noted that WA was the first state to launch this model and it is now being applied in other states.

The Mid West Regional Blueprint (Blueprint) gives an articulated understanding of the drivers of this region, the opportunities and areas in which investment can make a difference over time. The Minister noted that the Blueprint process is critical; not only does it give direction for the region, it also helps leaders to make well informed decisions to drive long-term prosperity. The Blueprint's focus is on growth, job creation, and investing in supporting jobs to support creating diverse, liveable communities that people actually want to live in.

Geraldton is one of 11 regional centres featured in the Regional Centres Development Plan initiative to strengthen the economics of key regional centres. Four of the 11 centres were selected as the first to undergo a regional development centres development plan. Minister Redman explained, "Geraldton is one of (the centres in the Regional Centres Development Plan) and it is going to put together a growth plan that ensures when you build your next suburb, you haven't got a wastewater treatment plant right in the

middle of it. The Growth Plan also profiles what you need to do as a region to attract investment and support growth in your area. We've never had significant growth plans connected to the State Planning Strategy in regional Western Australia. We are now rolling out the next four, which are Geraldton, Broome, Bunbury and Kalgoorlie; \$7.5 million dollars (is allocated) for these four centres."

In the Mid West, Morawa is a SuperTown, where planning is being undertaken to get investment decisions happening at a localised level rather than a regional level, which is what the Blueprints are designed to do. The Minister noted that it is not just the responsibility of Royalties for Regions funds to finance regional projects; it is also about attracting private sector resources and leveraging other resources.

The Mid West Blueprint's five pillars of focus are: physical infrastructure, digital and communications, economic development, highly desirable communities, knowledge and learning.

Two sub-plans have come out of the Blueprint. One was focused on tourism, which Minister Redman launched in Kalbarri recently, and has led to a key investment of \$20 million of Royalties for Regions funds into the Kalbarri Skywalk.

Minister Redman highlighted there are geo-tourism opportunities for the Mid West, such as the Abrolhos Islands and Batavia shipwreck, with camping nodes being part of that plan.

The other sub-plan is around business development, which was put together by the business community. Agriculture, resources, fishing, aquaculture and tourism were some of the big future opportunities. The Minister emphasised, "we want to make sure we diversify our economy with the strength that can be resilient to changes in the commodity prices we've seen recently."

The Minister also said, "Today, I am announcing \$20 million over four years of Royalties for Regions to WA Open for Business – part of Seizing the Opportunity initiative – to set up a shopfront for investment interest in Western Australia. This project will enhance the promotion of opportunities in Western Australian agriculture, while building on existing investment and trade mechanisms. New Zealand and Indonesia have both lifted their share of Chinese investment and we need to be competitive and to have someone advocating for the state."

WA Open for Business will be driven by a board with relevant industry roles and business acumen, while government will provide the technical skills. "That is what we need to match up to have something that actually works. If we get this right, there is no reason why it shouldn't pick up tourism any other areas that we think are opportunities here in WA," the Minister said.

Regional mobile phone services are another unmet need in regional Western Australia. Royalties for Regions has contributed \$85 million towards improving the regional mobile network. In addition to funding from Telstra, this created an extra 250 mobile phone towers, which is about unlocking potential in the regions through connectivity. This initiative will enable West Albany, Cranbrook and Ongerup to get new services soon.

Land development

Frank Marra, Chief Executive Officer of LandCorp, highlighted that collaboration is a key ingredient in achieving the vision of the Mid West as outlined in the Blueprint. LandCorp is working with others to identify gaps in realising the potential of the Mid West. LandCorp, in partnership with stakeholders, is putting in place the pieces to underpin long-term economic and social growth of the cities and towns in the region.

LandCorp's major infrastructure projects in the Mid West include the rejuvenation of the Batavia Coast Marina, and delivering adequate residential and light industrial land around the region to meet the needs now and into the future, in partnership with the Mid West Development Commission and City of Greater Geraldton.

Mr Marra noted that LandCorp must predict how much land is needed for employment, economic diversity, sustainability, infrastructure investment, education, health, safety, communications, technology and transport, which can be challenging. LandCorp also strives to deliver a sense of community, liveability, social amenity, vibrancy, activity nodes and recreation in its developments.

Mr Marra said, "I sense in the Mid West there is a wealth of the hard ingredients; the infrastructure components. What we now need to realise the full potential is some of the economic and social development aspects to leverage the infrastructure and local resources to address these potential gaps in the region."

Mr Marra used the example of residential housing, where currently there are mostly single, detached homes. Diversity in housing options is required, along with density. Part of LandCorp's response to the need for more housing choices is the Batavia Coast Marina Complex in Geraldton.

LandCorp's role is to facilitate the creation of highly desirable places for people to live, work and socialise. Not only is this important for community development, but vibrant places also attract value. Bring these two components together and you have a magnet for investment and economic development.

For example, community engagement helped shape the Batavia Coast Marina Complex with the inclusion of a town square. Prior to development, LandCorp ran a series of focus groups which highlighted that people wanted a range of activities, apartments, townhouses, cafes, shops and restaurants. The standout point was that people wanted to have a community square to drive activation and visitation.

Mr Marra finished by noting that LandCorp has delivered on or started 15 residential or light industry projects in the Mid West.

Aboriginal empowerment

Jennifer Gregory-Kniveton, Manager of the Bundiyarra-Irra Wangga Language Centre, informed the audience that Bundiyarra means 'good place'. The Centre is a passionate organisation with lots happening.

Bundiyarra was established under the Aboriginal Councils and Associations Act 1976 and was incorporated in 1992, but work had started back in 1980s with a group of people who wanted something for their future generations, a plan and a vision for their community.

Ms Gregory-Kniveton said their key driver was "Where do we want our kids to be in 20 years' time?" She emphasised that they want them to be productive members of society.

Ms Gregory-Kniveton said, "I see Bundiyarra as a vibrant, energetic organisation that captures all the dreams of those elders and is moving that forward. I think the key ingredient is the ability to unify. Aboriginal people need to work together."

"We want big things to happen on (our) land. The picture and the vision at the time was that all the

organisations on that land were working together and actually doing something for our people, participating in employment training and every aspect of what we're talking about, economic development."

A local women's group was also a big part of that vision. Ms Gregory-Kniveton noted that there are some strong women in the Mid West, and they are the backbone of the community. The ladies commenced their fight to win land rights for the reserve on which Bundiyarra-Irra Wangga Language Centre now exists. In 1994, after 10 years, the well-respected group of Yamatji elders finally won their fight and were awarded their land. They quickly set to work, as they saw an opportunity for a sporting, recreation and administrative centre for local Aboriginal people which would allow them to preserve their heritage, promote their culture and provide their children and families with a launching pad for the future.

Ms Gregory-Kniveton emphasised, "we are driving forward for Bundiyarra, to be innovative; we want to do these things for our future generations. Good governance, financial accountability, ability to attract and handpick really good staff are the reasons Bundiyarra has worked so well."

In terms of the future, the organisation has invested heavily in young people. Fifty per cent of the board are young people, which is important to be sustainable and offer a diversity of viewpoints.

The goal is for Bundiyarra to be respected and recognised as an organisation that can work well with government and politicians to move the goal posts for Aboriginal people and close the gap.

Sessions 2: Infrastructure in the Mid West

Roads in the Mid West

Patrick Walker, Executive General Manager, Advocacy and Members, RAC, talked about the growing popularity of electric vehicles. He noted RAC is filling a gap in infrastructure by providing fast-charging stations for electric vehicles, which is important technology to enable people with electric cars to move around the state. Currently, fast-charging stations are not commercially viable, so is something that RAC is doing for its members.

Road safety was another key point for Mr Walker, as he highlighted RAC's campaign to reduce the number of road fatalities and serious injuries on WA roads. Twenty years ago, Western Australia had the best road safety statistics and now it has the worst. While road quality is an important part of road safety, so too is driver attitude and behaviour.

Mr Walker noted the current model for charging road users has been criticised for being unsustainable and there is mounting pressure to change the system. RAC supports the need for the conversation but believes it must be informed and not ad hoc, because motorists are already paying their fair share. There must also be a broader reform of the taxation on motorists and the community must be directly engaged in the discussion.

RAC will trial a new automated (driverless) bus this year. Mr Walker noted that driverless vehicles will be the way of the future, and revealed that RAC is keen to learn how it can safely integrate automated vehicles into the transport fleet. Experts predict that road crashes will reduce by 80 to 90 per cent once cars are driving and not humans.

Rail infrastructure

Megan McCracken, General Manager Safety, People and Corporate Affairs, Brookfield Rail, outlined how rail has been an important part of the Mid West for about 130 years. The first railway was built in the Mid West in 1879.

Brookfield Rail operates the 49-year lease to manage portions of WA's rail freight network. It does not run the trains but operates the track, signals, train control and communications. It maintains the rail to ensure customers have safe, reliable pathways to port. Brookfield Rail employs local people, a total of 34 in the Mid West.

Rail, like roads, needs to adjust to changing needs. In the early days, rail carried livestock, fertiliser, fruit, wool, grain and passengers. Rail still transports grain but instead of small loads it is now a bulk carrier as a result of changing market conditions. Similar to roads, rail has different sizes and shapes to cope with the different types of traffic. For grain transport, timber and steel sleepers are used and very heavy concrete sleepers for iron ore traffic.

It is very important for rail infrastructure to be able to respond quickly to changing market needs, such as the recent rise of iron ore exports. This can be a challenge given the expense and lead times required to develop new infrastructure.

An example of Brookfield Rail redeveloping rail infrastructure in the Mid West was the investment of over \$500 million to transform what was a low-volume grain line to a heavy duty rail line capable of transporting iron ore through to Geraldton Port. Future capacity has been built into that line.

Brookfield Rail also supports community projects, such as school programs in Mullewa, tree planting and rail safety awareness campaigns.

Energy

Paul Italiano, Chief Executive Officer, Western Power, said that there are two major trends occurring in the electricity industry.

Firstly, today's lifestyle is increasingly dependent on electricity. These days, power outages have a profound impact on people's commercial livelihoods and lifestyles. Electricity companies globally are feeling the pressure to maintain a high level of performance and reliability. Statistically the electricity network in Western Australia has never been more reliable. However, Western Power is acutely aware that whenever we do have an outage, people experience it more harshly than they have in the past.

The other major global trend is the emergence of new technologies, such as photovoltaics, wind turbines, solar panels, solar farms and battery storage. Behind these, there are an array of other support technologies, such as big data analysis and network augmentation. The way power networks are designed, built and operated are fundamentally changing due to consumer behaviours and technologies evolving, giving us a broader range of options.

Mr Italiano highlighted, "(Western Power) are looking at distributed generation, for which Western Australia has the best suited geography in the world. There is no shortage of sun or wind in Geraldton."

Mr Italiano talked about the emergence of battery storage. As the price of residential storage goes down, so does the price of storage at the utility scale. There are options for Western Power to redesign the network

to store electricity as well as transport electricity. That has a direct application to the Mid West, which is ideally placed to be a source of utility-scale renewable generation as well as an ideal location for Western Power to trial small scale micro-grids and semi self-sufficient network applications. These could have applications elsewhere in our network, and more broadly in Australia and indeed overseas.

WA's Minister for Energy, Dr Mike Nahan MLA, had days earlier made an announcement about trialling a micro grid arrangement in Kalbarri, in the Mid West. The plan is to have an arrangement where Kalbarri can be self-sustaining for a period of time, so that any interruptions to the energy supply to Kalbarri would not be experienced by residents or tourists. It will be a cheaper solution to maintain reliable energy supply than the current situation, with a single feeder over 140 kilometres long.

In terms of local investment, Western Power is replacing 400 power poles and 21 kilometres of powerline in the Mid West. Replacing powerlines is an important function – it is expensive but will significantly upgrade the reliability of performance.

“It is incumbent upon us to find the most efficient way for us to deliver our services to you,” Mr Italiano emphasised. “It is important to note that our commitment is to provide a better level of service, safety and reliability, while we are reducing costs.”

Water

The Hon. Mia Davies MLA, WA Minister for Water; Sport and Recreation; Forestry, explained that her aim is to use her Water portfolio to promote investor confidence in regional Western Australia and to create sustainable jobs and business opportunities. There is enormous potential in the agricultural and pastoral sectors in the Mid West which can move to the next level through irrigation and innovation. The aim is to apply science within water agencies to define where those opportunities might exist.

Minster Davies outlined an initiative in the Mid West which aims to attract more investment. Fresh produce company, 4 Ways Fresh in Geraldton, formed strong partnerships within the community. Its production comprises 300 growing tunnels, rainfall harvesting systems, a packing shed and a cool room. Water for Food is making investment to assist 4 Way Fresh's operations, as government should do where individual business can't or shouldn't to lay the foundation to give investors' confidence to make those decisions.

There is real opportunity to grow the Mid West region in the horticulture space through irrigation to build business opportunities. Creating water sustainability is the key to the growth of the industry. Water is the key enabler to increase agricultural output as we push towards the state's target of lifting food production in our regional economies by at least 50 per cent by 2020, and two-fold by 2050.

Minister Davies noted, “now is the time for us to take advantage of that rapidly emerging market in South East Asia and China. There is also a unique opportunity for the Mid West and Murchison to play a major role in helping reach those targets through diversified agriculture and pastoralism. I believe we only get there through irrigation and innovation.”

The prospect of a new horticultural opportunity in Irwin near Dongara is exciting for the Mid West and the City of Geraldton, as the area has some of the best supporting services and transport infrastructure in the state.

Also exciting is investor interest in the Midlands project (near Badgingarra and Dandaragan) and work is continuing at a regional level to find other hotspots. The State Government should be making science and

information available for investors to make decisions about how best to use their land. The Midlands project is also fielding investor enquiries about large-scale fruit production, high quality biofuel production, beef feedlots and the potential for dairy. Work is being undertaken to prepare an information package, which will cover the region's local water resources, soil types, crop suitability and local infrastructure. A flow of technical information is expected to start in May 2016 and conclude in December 2017.

Royalties for Regions is supporting the Department of Water's significant groundwater investigation program. The funding is used to turbo-charge the program, as it will be vital in growing agriculture across the state, driving investment decisions and diversifying our economic base. This includes the \$1.9 million allocated to the Murchison project, which sees the world's best science applied to Mid West water options. This is the right space for State Government and Royalties for Regions to be making an investment.

Sessions 5: Looking at future opportunities

Biodiversity and carbon sink opportunities

Kent Broad is Director, Business Development for Carbon Neutral, a privately owned company that specialises in revegetating degraded areas with a biodiverse mix of endemic native species.

There is a huge opportunity for Australia and particularly the Mid West to be a net carbon sink, mainly due to past over-clearing. In the 1960's, Western Australia's policy was to clear 1,000 acres a year. As a result, salinity has been becoming an increasing issue. A recent example is a farmer whose family had been farming for 100 years, growing magnificent wheat crops until five years ago and now can't even grow a profitable barley crop. He had 800 hectares on his property – a fantastic potential carbon sink.

Mr Broad pointed out that the carbon sinking process does not take up good cropping land or food-producing land; it is land that has become degraded and is going to waste. Trees will benefit from the wind and water erosion.

The southern part of Western Australia is one of only 34 biodiversity hot spots in the world. By revegetating the land, we can prevent the biodiversity loss.

Over-clearing has also resulted in reduced winter rain, with the Mid West experiencing a 20 per cent drop off in rainfall. Returning some of the native vegetation is a step towards rectifying that trend.

Mr Broad's view was that the over-clearing has resulted in regional populations moving to the cities, resulting in unsustainable rural populations. Mr Broad spoke about the opportunities Carbon Neutral offers, including carbon farming; biodiversity and conservation offsets; sandalwood; irrigated products (such as Manuka honey); grazing; beekeeping; bush foods; eco and cultural tourism. All of these initiatives present good business opportunities for people in the regions.

Carbon Neutral is interested in their local communities. It employs about 100 local people, including 10 Aboriginal persons, spent \$16 million and utilised 80 local businesses in the Mid West area. Mr Broad said this has resulted in the Mid West exporting carbon offsets but getting the benefit locally.

Peter FitzSimons, Columnist, author, motivational speaker

Peter FitzSimons spoke about his non-fiction book, *Batavia*, which sets out the history of the Batavia

shipwreck on the Arolhos Islands, just off the coast of Geraldton in the Mid West.

As soon as Mr FitzSimons started researching the Batavia, he was transfixed by the story. Mr FitzSimons said the Batavia story is Lord of the Flies meets Nightmare on Elm Street – except that it is all true.

To understand the story of the Batavia, Mr FitzSimons said you need to understand the context – that the Dutch East Indies and the Spice Islands were a ‘big deal’ back in the 15th and 16th centuries. An ounce of spice from the Spice Islands could be sold at 600 times the price of other spices in any of the major European centres. The first sea voyage to transport spices was made in the latter part of the 15th century and that journey also established the city of Batavia, which is now known as Jakarta.

By 1628, the beginnings of the share market as we know it were in place with syndicates coming together to buy a share of the spices and profits. In 1628, the Batavia was built; the ‘Titanic’ of its day. With a little over 330 people on board, the Batavia left Amsterdam in late October 1628 with several other ships, under the command of Francisco Pelsaert, to trade spices. The ship’s captain was Adrian Jacobsz, while third in command, Jeronimus Cornelisz, was fleeing a cult in Holland and was in trouble with the law.

After Commander Pelsaert falls dangerously ill on the journey, Jacobsz and Jeronimus plot together to seize the ship. However, in early June 1629, with the crew not realising how close they were to land, the Batavia strikes the reef off the Arolhos Islands.

In an effort to get help, Pelsaert, along with 48 others, goes on a staggering 2,000-mile journey to the city of Batavia in a long boat. In the meantime, the rest of the survivors are left on a tiny bit of land now called Batavia’s graveyard, a flat island. The last person to get to the island is Cornelisz.

Cornelisz tells the survivors, ‘Jacobsz is gone, Pelsaert is gone, so I am in control’. He establishes command and quickly realises there is not enough food for everyone to last even a few weeks. He gathers his 18 mutineers and forms a council.

Wiebbe Hayes was a soldier and part of the remaining group of survivors. He had no authority but was clever; he had worked out how to gather rainwater and store it. Cornelisz considered Hayes a danger to his authority. He asks Hayes to take 20 of his men to look for water on the ‘high island’ (which Cornelisz already knew did not contain any water) and to leave their weapons behind. Cornelisz and his mutineers believe they have eliminated the danger posed by Hayes and his 20 men.

Over the next three days as Hayes searches for water, he discovers ‘jumping cats’ (wallabies), which they use as a food supply. They continue to search for water for several days and finally discover fresh water beneath a hollow rock. Hayes and his men now have plenty of food and water to survive on the high island.

Cornelisz meanwhile divides the remaining survivors into groups and sends them out to separate islands. He gathers all of the ammunition, muskets, cutlasses, treasure chests and wine. Another 22 men are recruited, putting 40 on the council. Cornelisz then sends out his mutineers to kill the other survivors on each of the islands.

Due to their separation, the island groups don’t know about the killings that are starting to take place on the other islands. Women and children were also killed, with only a few women left alive.

Wiebbe Hayes and his men begin taking refugees from the other islands where Cornelisz’s men have

been raiding. Hayes eventually forms a group of 50 men and makes plans to fight back. They make slings out of wallaby pelts, gather rocks and sharpen sticks into spears. In early July 1629, the first attack from Cornelisz's men comes in towards the high island – 20 murderers with their muskets. The men are successfully fended off.

The second attack comes two weeks later, with the same outcome. Then a week later again, 30 of Cornelisz's men attack, and once again Hayes and his men beat them off. In September 1629, a full-scale attack is planned to take place with 40 men approaching the island.... when they see the sails of Pelsaert's rescue yacht.

From there proceeds a race between the two groups – “the goodies and the baddies”, as Mr FitzSimons refers to them – to get to the rescue yacht first. The goodies, Hayes' men, get there first. Cornelisz and his mutineers are captured. Cornelisz is tried on the island; found guilty of mutiny and hanged with six of his men. The remaining mutineers were taken back to Java and tried; many were subsequently executed.

Pelsaert's group went back to Batavia's graveyard and documented what happened, producing a 27,000-word transcript summarising the events. FitzSimons said that this transcript was one of the documents he referenced extensively for his book. He said that currently there are early-stage plans to turn this intriguing story into a movie.

The Batavia shipwreck and its story are an important part of Australian history – and particularly for the Mid West – and Mr FitzSimons encouraged a culture of preservation for this incredible story and its remaining artefacts.

Future of the Mid West

List of speakers (in order of presentations):

- Gavin Treasure, Chief Executive Officer, Mid West Development Commission
- Hon. Terry Redman MLA, WA Minister for Regional Development; Lands: Minister Assisting the Minister for State Development; Leader of The Nationals (WA)
- Frank Marra, Chief Executive Officer, LandCorp
- Jennifer Gregory-Kniveton, Manager, Bundiyarra-Irra Wangga Language Centre
- Patrick Walker, Executive General Manager, Advocacy and Members, Royal Automobile Club of Western Australia
- Megan McCracken, General Manager Safety, People and Corporate Affairs, Brookfield Rail
- Paul Italiano, Chief Executive Officer, Western Power
- Hon. Mia Davies MLA, WA Minister for Water; Sport and Recreation; Forestry
- Ken Diehm, Chief Executive Officer, City of Greater Geraldton
- Andrew Outhwaite, Founder, Pollinators Inc.
- Professor Carole Jackson, Science Director, International Centre for Radio Astronomy Research, Curtin University; Member, Australia and New Zealand Square Kilometre Array Coordination Committee
- Erica Starling, Owner and Manager, Indian Ocean Fresh Australia
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- Andrew Worland, General Manager – Wiluna and Project Development, Toro Energy
- Patrick Bourke, General Manager, Human Resources and Health, Safety, Environment and Community, Karara Mining
- Kent Broad, Director, Business Development, Carbon Neutral
- Peter FitzSimons, columnist, author and motivational speaker

Mid West Region, WA

